

Design Expo Absence Request

Hi Prof. Peisen Huang, Prof. Vincent Chang, Prof. Chengbin Ma and Prof. Kai Xu. I am a senior student from 2+2 program and I have encountered a dilemma thus I have to regretfully write this to ask for your help.

First of all, thank all of you for providing us such a free and humanized studying Environment and thank you for your precious patience and kindness. I have learned a great lot not only in academia, but also about how to behave honorable and how to succeed in the real world.

I understand that the course timeline is carefully designed to satisfy most student's requirements and meet their schedule. I have heard of the faculties have put huge effort to separate the graduation for domestic and 2+2 students, in order to let the domestic students full-fill their intern requirements. I also believe the faculties much have given huge effort in order to adjust the course timeline to meet those 2+2 students' personal needs like going home or traveling. By here I thank all of the faculties who have tried to provide convenience to students and I believe the Joint Institute will become a better institute not only in research and teaching, but also in humanization and careness of students' personal development and their difficulties.

Although I understand the course schedule and I greatly respect the syllabus, I still have to regretfully ask you for the approving of an absence on Design Expo. As one of the 2+2 student, among others, I applied to the grad school in U.S and luckily I was admitted by the School of Computer Science of Carnegie Mellon University for their PhD program. As an International student, I will have to attend the Orientation on August 16th.

As I have lived in U.S for 2 years, I have most of my personal stuffs left in Ann Arbor, Mostly books (I have like 40 text books and manuals there, none of them are thin, mostly are Technical Manuals, like O'Reilly's Linux Kernel and Shell script programming etc.), and clothes. Those are all packed up in boxes and they are too heavy to really send via postal service. Thus I rent an U-HAUL and hired a driver to drive me to Pittsburgh.

More, as my first paper is finished during this summer and submitted to ACM ASPLOS 2012 conference, I think it is necessary to meet him in person and thank him for his guidance. I also planned to meet with my PhD mentor for discussing future development for our research (as the paper will take several review and revise cycle before publish, I think we need to talk about modifications to the paper for next review). Most importantly, I will have to wrap up and take everything with me and take the U-HAUL to Pittsburgh.

Thus I booked my flight ticket on August 11th noon, as I planned to arrive at Detroit Michigan at 12th afternoon and probably arrive at Ann Arbor in the afternoon. I will take 13th to meet with my adviser in UM and also my PhD mentor and pack up and then drive to Pittsburgh on 14th, which is Sunday. Then I have to sleep in a Motel as the Key office won't open on Sunday and I have to wait until Monday to get my keys and move in. And the orientation starts on 16th.

I apologize for this conflicting agenda. However, I really didn't know the design expo time when I booked the ticket. First of all, as earlier booking could provide cheaper flight ticket (I bought it for around \$900 and now it's more than \$2300), I booked it in May when I don't really know the design expo time and secondly, I really tried to defer this flight as late as possible. Flight in advance for 4 days before mandatory orientation and I still have to move all my heavy stuff is the shortest day I can think of. I am so depressed that I still can't avoid the conflict.

I understand the Orientation itself is not a big deal. I have lived in U.S for 2 years and as Prof. Peisen Huang said, students can arrive later. However, as you may also know, the immigration office require timely reporting to the corresponding University otherwise the I-20 will be invalidated. This is a quote from the department assistant: "Note that the begin date for International Students is August 16. If you plan to arrive more than 30 days earlier, or even one day later, than August 16 or you plan to begin the program in any semester other than F11, please let me know immediately so I can accurately reflect the correct date in processing your I-20 form. This will save a lot of time, since any corrections require LOTS of extra paperwork. Be sure to check the OIE website for all the other information you might need regarding your visa application." I found out the classes schedule way later than I got my I-20 issued. Thus any late attending will result in "LOTS of extra paperwork"... I don't want to be a troublesome person even before I arrive.

Finally, I believe I have contribute a lot on this project. Personally, it is very disappointing to be absent when I could finally see it accomplished, as I am the person who form the team, bring out the idea and write the proposal at the beginning (if Prof. Peisen and Prof. Vincent still remember, I spent a whole day writing and revising the proposal alone :)). However, if

I did attend the Expo, I would have to change my flight (may account for \$1400 more cost); I would have to re-book the U-HAUL and inform the driver; I would have no time to meet with my UM adviser and mentor talking about future work and I would probably be late to the Orientation and ask the assistance for “LOTS of extra paperwork” just for my several days lateness.

On the other hand, I understand the importance of Final Expo, this is the place where we show our product to the Sponsor and user! However, though I may not stand by my team, I still can record a video and play it on EXPO, explaining what I have done and my own part. We have done this before in UM (please google ‘SURE Hongyi Xin’, that’s my final presentation for UM’s summer research, we present to a camera instead of real audience.) I think this could be also manageable for my case. I personally don’t think this could hurt to much as most of the information will still be delivered and my fellow teammates can explain the questions. Even if this may deduct some points from my course grade, I will understand and accept those punishments, since I left for personal reasons. However, I really can’t afford an extra \$1400 money plus letting others do “LOTS of extra work” just for standing at the EXPO for my probably 1 minute speech, when I really could record that minute in advance.

Again, I am very sorry for such request. I know this could be a bad example to other students so I won’t tell others. I also understand this may add extra work to you and all of you are super busy. But still, I believe you were once an international student and were once excited and nervous about entering U.S. I know this request may seem unreasonable and late. But please believe me, nobody likes doing this and I am really really out of option except writing this request.

Again, thank you for your patience and kindness! I wish the JI will one day be one of the most famous institute in the world!